

TRANS-EUROPEAN ROMA FEDERATION

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RE: MEADOWLANDS CARAVAN PARK, Little Waltham, Essex

My name is Grattan Puxon, I am a retired journalist and co-author with Dr Donald Kenrick of *Destiny of Europe's Gypsies*. I was a founder member in 1966 of the Gypsy Council and was for ten years (1971-1981) General Secretary of the World Romani Congress. I am presently honorary secretary of the Trans-European Roma Federation.

On Friday, 16 January I attended at Chelmsford Borough Council offices to assist a number of people from the Meadowlands Caravan Park to make applications as homeless, in view of the fact that they faced eviction from the caravan park on Monday, 26 January 2004.

I was permitted by the Homeless Investigation Officers, Ms Jayne Hinton and Mrs Janet Beauchamp, to accompany the applicants at their interviews. (I can supply a list of those Meadowlands plot owners and residents who filled in homeless applications that day).

I was informed by the officers that they believed alternate caravan site plots were available at Swale or Swanley, in Kent, and at the South Mimms caravan site in Hertfordshire.

I thanked them for these suggestions and said I and my colleague would check out the availability of places in Kent and Hertfordshire. I subsequently learnt from Dr Kenrick that no plots or pitches were currently available in either of those counties and that, in fact, there were long waiting lists. I was also informed that a visit to a site at Swanley, Kent, had produced no positive results. Yesterday I obtained the name and number of the manager at South Mimms caravan site - Mr John Doherty (07748755497) only to find out that there were no vacancies there.

I am ready to assist the residents at Meadowlands by following up any further suggestions by officers of Chelmsford Borough Council.